

Medical Princess 601

Chapter 601 Another One Intending to Make Use of Qing'er

"You are no match for her!" Qi Rongzhi handed her teacup to Qin Yuru for drinking wine, filled both her cup and Qin Yuru's cup, and then said sadly.

"Bitch! Since she won't let me go, I won't let her go either. Only one of us can survive!" Qin Yuru picked up the wine cup, tossed it off, and said viciously.

"She's going to come out of the Yuhui Nunnery, and you won't be able to see her after that even if you want to. I heard that the consort selection for several princes is going to be held. She, who is of high status, is very likely to stand out in the selection. When the time comes, she will be a princess, while you, the Young Madam of Duke Yong's Mansion, will be obviously inferior to her and have to kneel in front of her and bow to her."

Qi Rongzhi took a sip of wine and said.

"I won't let that happen! I won't have the chance to see her after that, but I got the chance now, right? Since she is still in the Yuhui Nunnery, I have plenty of opportunities!" Qin Yuru said in a sharp voice.

"In fact, you are right. I tell you..." Qi Rongzhi pulled her chair towards Qin Yuru and said in a low voice.

Qin Yuru also leaned over and then began to nod with a vicious smile slowly showing up on her gloomy face...

After Shao Yanru left, Shao Wanru's life became much more peaceful. She didn't have to worry that Shao Yanru would suddenly make trouble and restored her life in seclusion.

She basically didn't show up in front of others. As the last batch of the officers of the Ministry of Justice left, the Yuhui Nunnery went back to what it had been before and even attracted a little more pilgrims. Plenty of people were curious about the place where the late emperor's concubines were locked up, and some of them took the opportunity to sneak into the back mountain of the Yuhui Nunnery with the excuse of offering incense to the Buddha.

Although the nuns of the Yuhui Nunnery prohibited these pilgrims from going to the back mountain, some people still sneaked to the edge of the high wall and tried to look inside. Fortunately, with some nuns guarding the side door, no one could sneak in.

After all, the nuns were not the members of the Ministry of Justice and could only try to persuade them to leave. If they really did something against the rules, the nuns could do nothing about it. Moreover, the maple forest on the back mountain open to the public recently offered an opportunity for many visitors to sneak to the high wall with the excuse of enjoying the view. The nuns in the Yuhui Nunnery could do nothing but turn a blind eye to it.

Fortunately, most of the pilgrims were civilized. After being persuaded to leave or stealing a glance and finding nothing unusual, they were no longer curious and would not go there next time.

In fact, except for the high wall, there was nothing worth seeing. They couldn't get into the area behind the high wall. The only side door of the high wall was guarded by several strong nuns, and no one was allowed to approach it.

Under such circumstances, someone came to visit Shao Wanru, which really made her feel strange.

"Second Miss!" The old maid stepped forward, bowed to Shao Wanru, and addressed her as before.

"Who sent you here?" After looking the old maid up and down and recognizing that she was a servant of the General's Mansion, Shao Wanru involuntarily put down the altar in her hand and asked in astonishment.

In the past three years, she got some news of the Qin's Mansion on the mountain occasionally, but not much. Apart from the news of Shui Ruolan giving birth to a child reported by someone sent by the Qin's Mansion, other news was found out by Shao Wanru. The Qin's Mansion had never sent someone to report something else.

She was wondering what they sent the old maid here this time for!

"Second Miss, Old Grandma is seriously sick." The old maid wiped her slightly red eyes and said.

"Grandma is sick? How did it happen?" Shao Wanru asked in surprise.

"It's probably because she feels sad or she gets old. I have no idea. Many doctors couldn't cure her for the time being and only said that she's seriously sick. That's the reason why Madam thought of you and hoped that you could go down the mountain to treat Old Grandma!" The old maid said.

"When should I go?" Shao Wanru nodded and asked.

"It would be best if you could go now."

Shao Wanru looked out of the window and found that it was already afternoon. If she went to the Qin's Mansion to treat her grandma, she definitely could not come back today. But in that case, where should she spend the night?

She should live in her mansion after going down the mountain. But she went back in a hurry and didn't have a room prepared for her in Duke Xing's Mansion. It was inappropriate for her to live in a guest room after returning to her mansion!

"Miss, it's inappropriate for you to go down the mountain. Let's ask Old Grandma to come up the mountain later!" Yujie advised.

"But Old Madam is seriously sick..." The old maid said hesitantly and uneasily.

"When we were in Jiangzhou, Old Grandma went to the Jingxin Monastery every time she got seriously sick. Besides, Mingqiu Nun is on the mountain now!" Yujie ignored the old maid and reminded Shao Wanru.

Although Shao Wanru knew some medical skills, she certainly couldn't compare with Mingqiu Nun. Moreover, no one knew Old Grandma's condition better than Mingqiu Nun!

"Go back now. Ask Old Madam to come up the mountain today if it's still early, or ask her to come tomorrow if it's too late!" Shao Wanru said. She found Yujie's suggestion quite good after thinking for a while.

"Yes, Second Miss, I'm going back now!" The old maid looked at Yujie and Shao Wanru, seemed to be reluctant, but had to agree.

"Yujie, walk her out!" Shao Wanru gave an order in a soft voice.

Yujie nodded and walked the old maid out. Walking into the yard, the old maid looked at Qing'er, who was sweeping the floor, pointed to Qing'er with a smile, and said after rolling her eyes, "Yujie, as the personal maid of the Second Miss, you don't have to walk me out of the courtyard. The little maid can walk me out!"

"Uh..." Yujie said hesitantly.

"Yujie, you'd better go back to serve the Second Miss. If you walk me out and the Second Miss needs something, do you want an inferior maid to serve her?" The old maid advised.

"Well, Qing'er, come here and walk this nanny out!" The old maid made sense, so Yujie agreed with a nod after thinking for a while.

"Okay!" Qing'er replied. She put down the broom in her hand and ran over cheerfully. At first glance, the old maid could tell that she was a little maid, who was not very smart and much less dignified than Yujie.

The old maid was very satisfied. After saying goodbye to Yujie, she walked out behind Qing'er.

"You are Qing'er, right?" As soon as they left the courtyard, the old maid took a few steps forward with a smile, walked side by side with Qing'er, and greeted her with a smile.

"Yes, I'm Qing'er. Which mansion do you come from? What do you come here for?" Qing'er asked curiously. She was in the yard just now, so she did not know where the old maid came from.

When the old maid came, she opened the door. After that, Yujie happened to be standing in the corridor. At the sight of Yujie, the old maid called "Yujie" loudly and then was led into the room to meet Shao Wanru.

"I'm here to meet the Second Miss because Old Madam is sick..." The old maid said with a sad face.

"Second Miss? My master is the Fifth Miss." Qing'er interrupted the old maid and corrected her.

"I know that the Second Miss is now the Fifth Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion, but she has been the Second Miss before. I..." The old maid hurriedly explained.

However, she was interrupted by Qing'er, who looked serious, "She used to be the Second Miss. But now everyone calls my master the Fifth Miss. Otherwise, it will be confusing!"

"I know, but I..."

"You should call my master the Fifth Miss. Otherwise, both Duke Xing's Mansion and Great Elder Princess's Mansion will get angry and probably want to find out who still addresses my master as before!" Qing'er interrupted the old maid rudely again and seemed to be angry, "If you refuse to address my master in the right way, I won't walk you out!"

After saying that, Qing'er stopped as if refusing to walk her out.

"Fine, fine, fine, I was wrong. She's the Fifth Miss, the Fifth Miss!" The old maid hurriedly changed the way of addressing Shao Wanru.

Now Qing'er showed a satisfied look, continued walking, and said, "You are the former servant of my master, so you are from the Qin's Mansion? I heard that Madam and Old Madam of the Qin's Mansion are very kind to my master. I'm wondering you were sent by Madam or Old Madam?"

Qing'er was just a young girl, who got angry and cooled down easily. Hearing the old maid correct herself, she showed a complacent smile, which made the old maid beside her secretly despise her, "She's such a little girl that she argued with me for the way of addressing her master."

Nevertheless, it was easy to fool such a person and more convenient to get the information she wanted from such a person. Compared with Yujie, who was shrewd, Qing'er was much better.

"I was sent by Madam Shui. Old Madam is sick. Madam Shui remembered that the Second... Fifth Miss has treated Old Madam before, so she specially instructed me to ask the Fifth Miss to go down the mountain. But the Fifth Miss was reluctant!" The old maid said with a sigh and her face darkening, "Old Madam is sick, and she insists on asking Old Madam to come up the mountain, but..."

"Is Old Madam the former grandma of my master?" Qing'er opened her eyes wide and asked curiously because Shao Wanru's being recognized as a Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion was a legend known to plenty of people in the capital city.

The most important reason was that Shao Wanru was actually very noble and was related to the Great Elder Princess.

Although Qing'er was a little maid, she knew this sensational matter.

"Yes, our Old Madam is the former grandma of the Second... Fifth Miss. She has raised the Fifth Miss since the Fifth Miss was a child and has been sincerely kind to the Fifth Miss. However, why is it so difficult for her, who is sick now, to meet the Fifth Miss!" The old maid said with emotion. As she said, her eyes turned red and she wiped her eyes with her sleeve.

Qing'er rolled her eyes and said sincerely with a nod, "My master is now the Fifth Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion, which attaches great importance to rules and doesn't allow any mistakes. Now she has been observing mourning for the Heir and the Infanta, so she can't meet anyone at will."

"But our Old Madam is seriously sick!" The old maid said, thinking the maid quite queer and watching her consider her words reasonable, dumbfounded.

Was the maid's brain made of stone? The maid didn't even know what she was talking about.

"Anyway, she has been sick for a few days, so she doesn't have to meet my master today. Just ask her to come up the mountain tomorrow. She'll be fine after my master asks the nun in the nunnery to treat her!" Qing'er said, still looking careless and not understand the situation.

"In fact, I noticed it just now that the Second... Fifth Miss wanted to go down the mountain to see Old Madam. Old Madam is old and her sickness could be serious!" The old maid said, thinking that she didn't have to be so tactful. In front of such an obtuse maid, if her words were too tactful, she would waste her words on the maid!

Chapter 602 Turn Qin Yuru's Trick against Her, Two Carriages

"Now down the mountain..." The old maid said with a sigh. She seemed to have much to say but didn't know where to start at the moment, so she just said a few words and paused.

However, her refraining from finishing the sentence was the most curiosity-provoking. How could Qing'er, who was just an immature maid, restrain herself? She became concerned about her master and asked anxiously, "Nanny, what's going on down the mountain? Does it have anything to do with my master? What's going on? Tell me!"

"I... can't tell you about the nonsense!" The old maid shook her head and said helplessly. After that, she kept her mouth shut and seemed to be unwilling to say anything no matter how Qing'er kept asking her.

It made Qing'er feel itching to know it. She begged, promised to keep it a secret, and kept saying that she just wanted to know it and would never tell anyone else.

Finally, she managed to convince the old maid to tell her. Looking around and finding no one else around them, the old maid pulled Qing'er to hide behind a tree and said in a low voice, "People said that the Second... Fifth Miss is an ungrateful person, who claims to observe mourning for her parents on the mountain for three years but actually leaves our Old Madam, who has raised her, alone after becoming a Miss of a higher status."

"How is that possible? My master came up the mountain to observe mourning for the former Heir and the Infanta!" Qing'er said furiously.

"I know it's true, but others spread the rumor. Do you know why our Old Madam suddenly fell sick?" The old maid smacked her lips and said.

"Why?" Qing'er asked, becoming increasingly itching to inquire about the whole story.

"At a banquet, the Mesdames and Old Mesdames from other manors said that the Fifth Miss was ungrateful despite being raised by our Old Madam for so many years and she would not go down the mountain to visit her even if our Old Madam got sick. This time I came here to tell the Fifth Miss that our Old Madam is sick, but in fact, the Mesdames of plenty of mansions are waiting for what the Fifth Miss will do. If the Fifth Miss doesn't act properly, I'm afraid..."

The old maid sighed, and then pulled Qing'er out and said, "Forget it. It's none of our business. Even if our Old Madam is ridiculed by all the Mesdames from other mansions in the future, it has nothing to do with us, who are just servants. As a Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion, the Fifth Miss could get married in the future even... with a tarnished reputation!"

"Hey, what are you talking about? What do you mean by saying that my master could get married even with a tarnished reputation!" Qing'er said. She became displeased, stood still, and refused to leave with the old maid.

"Fine, fine, it's my fault, but it really has nothing to do with me. I am just a servant and come here to pass on a message. Let's go. I've met the Fifth Miss. It's okay that she's reluctant to go down the mountain. Anyway those Mesdames and Old Mesdames our Old Madam associates with are probably not as noble as Duke Xing's Mansion. Just let them say what they like!"

The old maid seemed to be unwilling to get into trouble, pulled Qing'er hard, and was about to go out.

However, instead of walking out, Qing'er turned around and pulled the old maid back, while saying, "Let's go to meet the Fifth Miss and tell her about it. Although they are probably not as noble as Duke Xing's Mansion, I can't allow them to gossip about my master anyway!"

Qing'er said in rage.

"Qing'er, you don't have to worry about it. What can we do as servants? Your master has the final say. Didn't the Fifth Miss decide to ask Old Madam to come up the mountain tomorrow? Let's go now. Don't get yourself into trouble!" The old maid didn't want to go with Qing'er, but she, who was not as strong as Qing'er, was pulled back and shouted anxiously.

"You didn't tell my master that plenty of Mesdames and Old Mesdames mocked Old Madam of General Qin's Mansion. My master respects Old Madam Qin the most and won't allow her to be mocked by others!" Qing'er said with an angry look, thinking that she did it to defend the reputation of her master, and Old Madam Qin and her master would definitely be pleased with it.

"I... I was just afraid of getting into trouble, so I just said as our Madam told me. Anyway, it has nothing to do with us, who are just servants. Why do you have to be so serious about it..." The old maid seemed to be reluctant to go back and kept persuading Qing'er to drop the idea. However, she was pulled back by Qing'er.

The two of them came back while pulling and pushing each other. Yujie happened to stand in the corridor. Seeing them come back, she came over with a surprised look.

"Sister Yujie, watch over her, I have something important to report to the Fifth Miss!" Qing'er said indignantly and her face turned red due to fatigue. Along the way, although the old maid didn't struggle fiercely, Qing'er was so tired that she breathed heavily.

"Okay, get in. Qu Le is inside. You can ask her to inform the Fifth Miss!" Yujie looked at the old maid and said with a nod.

Qing'er wiped the sweat off her forehead and hurried to the silence room.

Hearing the sound from outside, Qu Le came out of the silence room, and stood still at the sight of Qing'er.

"Sister Qu Le, I have something important to report to the Fifth Miss!" Qing'er said anxiously.

Qu Le glanced at her face, which turned red due to fatigue and went in to report. After a while, she asked Qing'er to get in, and then there came Qing'er's angry and loud voice from inside. Qing'er was talking about what she had heard from the old maid. In the courtyard, the old maid leaned forward and heard everything clearly.

However, after that, she couldn't hear Shao Wanru's voice clearly even if she leaned forward. Yujie was standing beside her, so she couldn't go over even if she wanted to and could only stand in the yard with a forced smile.

It didn't take long for Qing'er to come out in rage. She said to the old maid, "Don't leave at the moment and follow us down the mountain later. My master is going down the mountain to visit Old Madam Qin

right away. How can we allow those, who look down on Old Madam Qin, gossip about her, and tarnish my master's reputation!"

"Is the Fifth Miss going down the mountain to visit Old Madam?" The old maid was stunned and asked.

"Yes, we'll go now!" Qing'er said complacently.

"But now... it's a little late. It's better for the Fifth Miss to stay in the Qin's Mansion tonight. It's been a long time since Old Madam met the Fifth Miss." The old maid said with joy.

"Uh... my master has her plan!" Qing'er couldn't answer at the moment, so she just said vaguely.

"No, I have to tell Old Madam about it so that she will be delighted and prepare a courtyard for the Fifth Miss. During all these years, no matter how much Old Madam missed the Fifth Miss, she didn't dare to ask the Fifth Miss to visit her!" The old maid said, began to wipe off her tears emotionally, and then turned to run out.

They couldn't catch up with her even if they wanted to!

In the yard, neither Yujie nor Qing'er chased after her. After they stood calmly for a while, Qing'er said, "Let me go outside and prepare a carriage for Miss!"

"Okay!" Yujie said knowingly with a nod and turned back to the silence room.

In the silence room, Qu Le had helped Shao Wanru freshen up and change her clothes. Now Shao Wanru was dressed in a set of Qu Le's clothes instead of the black clothes in which she had always been dressed in the Yuhui Nunnery or her own clothes.

Qu Le was a maid. Nevertheless, because she worked in Duke Xing's Mansion, in order to show that they thought highly of Shao Wanru, Duke Xing's Mansion usually sent someone to make new clothes for Yujie and Qu Le when making clothes for other servants in the mansion in the past few years, although the clothes were made of the material for servants.

Now Shao Wanru was dressed in a set of clothes, which Qu Le had never worn, and they fit Shao Wanru.

Her hair was done in two simple buns fixed with a hairpin. Everyone would think that she was just a maid from a mansion.

"Let's go!" Shao Wanru stood up, pulled the front of her clothes, and said.

"Miss, are you really going down the mountain? It's dangerous now!" Yujie looked at the sky outside the window and said uneasily. The sun is sinking in the west. They could go down the mountain at the moment, but it would be dark soon and they might run into danger on the way. The pilgrims, who were not going to stay in the Yuhui Nunnery, had basically gone back at this time.

"It doesn't matter. Let's go down and have a look. But we are not going to go down the mountain in our carriage!" Shao Wanru said with a smile. The one, who made such a great effort to trick her down the mountain, seemed to have a great plot!

The one able to make use of a servant of the Qin's Mansion should be Qin Yuru! She didn't kill Qin Yuru three years ago for the sake of Old Madam Qin and Qin Huaiyong. Now was Qin Yuru going to stir up trouble again?

Shao Yanru was so scheming that she managed to provoke Qin Yuru to take action. Well, she would teach Shao Yanru a lesson that it was unwise to cooperate with someone as malicious as a snake!

Qin Yuru was a fierce poisonous snake, which could be out of control at any time.

"Yujie, go and tell Mingqiu Nun that I want to borrow the carriage in which she went down the mountain!" Shao Wanru gave an order.

Mingqiu Nun went down the mountain to treat Chu Liuchen from time to time, so the Yuhui Nunnery prepared a carriage for her. Although it was not big, it was very light and useful.

"Yes, I'm going now!" Yujie said with a nod, but she stopped after taking only a few steps, "Miss, we need a coachman!"

In the past, when Mingqiu Nun went down the mountain, her carriage would be driven by a nun in the Yuhui Nunnery, who was able to do it. But now it was inappropriate to ask a nun in the Yuhui Nunnery to drive the carriage.

"It doesn't matter. Qing'er is able to drive the carriage. Besides, I'll let her drive our carriage and let the coachman from my grandma's mansion drive the carriage of the Yuhui Nunnery!"

Shao Wanru made the arrangement unhurriedly.

Of course, Qing'er was not an ordinary maid. Shao Wanru had asked her just now and knew that she could drive a carriage. The coachman sent by her grandma was also trustworthy. At that time, her grandma drove the coachman from Duke Xing's Mansion away with a trick because he was untrustworthy!

Knowing that her master had made a proper arrangement, Yujie felt at ease and turned to Mingqiu Nun to borrow the carriage.

After packing up for a while, Shao Wanru walked out of the Yuhui Nunnery with Qu Le. When they reached the parking place, Yujie had borrowed the carriage and waited there.

Qing'er sat on the shaft of her carriage, while the coachman from Rui'an Great Elder Princess's Mansion sat on the shaft of the carriage borrowed from Mingqiu Nun.

Shao Wanru asked Qu Le to go back and stayed here to watch over the situation. She only took Yujie to get in the ordinary carriage of Mingqiu Nun, and Qing'er drove an empty carriage, which moved slowly in front of her carriage.

The two carriages left the side door of the Yuhui Nunnery one after the other and then went down the mountain along the path. The old maid from the Qin's Mansion had disappeared...

Chapter 603 It's Not the First Miss Shao, but the First Miss Qin

Qing'er's carriage went all the way forward, followed by Shao Wanru's carriage.

Both of the two carriages moved slowly. The mountain path was bumpy and the sun had gone down at the moment. They needed to be more careful when driving in the grove.

It had rained heavily yesterday, and the sunlight was not strong enough today, so the ground was still very wet and slippery. They could not make any mistakes while driving on the mountain path.

Qing'er's carriage moved steadily, and she became even more careful when making a turn. Her master had specially told her to pay more attention, which meant that the trip would not be peaceful.

Along the way down the mountain, although the wheels slipped a little, nothing went wrong basically. At the thought that they were going to arrive at the flat ground at the foot of the mountain after making the last turn, Qing'er involuntarily breathed a sigh of relief and looked around. At this moment, it became dark, but they still didn't need a light.

They were going to arrive at the foot of the mountain and could step on a flat path leading to the capital after making the following turn. Anyone could be careless at this moment.

From Qing'er's angle, she could see people talking at the intersection down the mountain, where there was a teahouse. Anyone who had been to the Yuhui Nunnery knew it. Qing'er, who had traveled back and forth between the Yuhui Nunnery and the capital city from time to time, certainly knew it.

Hearing people talking and laughing and thinking that they were going to arrive at the foot of the mountain, one would naturally slack off. Even an experienced coachman would let out a sigh of relief and relax at this moment.

However, an accident occurred at this moment.

The horse pulling the carriage suddenly ran wildly, while the corner was in front. With her face changing dramatically, Qing'er suddenly pulled the reins in her hand and jumped aside swiftly. The cliff was just a few feet away from her. If Qing'er had not been prepared for unexpected conditions, she would not have been able to escape, not to mention the one in the carriage, whose door was tightly closed.

The horse led the carriage into the small cliff at the corner.

The huge noise had alarmed the people in the teahouse. Plenty of them ran out and saw the carriage falling down in shock. All of them opened their eyes wide, gasped in fear, and couldn't even say a word.

"Quick, there's a pool below. Hurry to save them!" Someone, who knew about the terrain, shouted.

Because it was the last turn at the entrance of the mountain, plenty of people walked around here when they were unoccupied, and some people, who drank tea in the teahouse below, even walked there to enjoy the scene.

There was a lake at the bottom of the cliff, which was not very high. If a pedestrian fell from here, the pedestrian would not die, because the water could serve as a cushion for protecting the pedestrian. But now the carriage fell down with people, and it was still cool on an autumn night.

If someone in the carriage fell down, the one would definitely die.

"It'll take an hour to go there. We won't be able to save them in time!" Someone realized what had happened and said with a sigh, "I'm wondering which mansion the carriage belongs to and what made the coachman fail to see the road clearly so that the carriage fell down like that!"

"Exactly. Is there anyone among us able to swim? If there is, I think it's a good deed to collect their bodies even if it's impossible to save them!" Another person said.

The one made sense. Some people had headed there from the back of the road!

"There's a maid, who seems to have fallen from the carriage!" A sharp-eyed person, who had seen Qing'er jump out of the carriage, shouted loudly.

A few people ran over. Some of them helped Qing'er, who was still lying on the ground, up. Noticing that the maid was actually fine despite her injury, they all said loudly that the maid was very lucky.

"Which mansion are you from? Who was in the carriage just now?" Seeing that Qing'er could sit up and talk, someone asked with concern.

"My master is the Fifth Miss... of Duke Xing's Mansion..." Qing'er clutched her arm and said with a pale face.

The Fifth Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion?

The person, who asked the question, and others all stood, gazing at one another.

They had actually heard of the Fifth Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion. Wasn't she the "bane" discussed animatedly in the capital city a few days ago? Although the rumors had been suppressed later.

An old maid, who squeezed herself into the crowd from outside, was stunned for a moment at the sight of Qing'er. She did not expect that Qing'er could survive.

It was really unexpected that the maid survived although the whole carriage had fallen down.

"Qing'er? Qing'er, is it really you?" The old maid rolled her eyes, rushed over, took Qing'er's hand, and said emotionally, "Is... is the Second Miss who fell down in the carriage just now?"

Although Qing'er survived, it could change nothing. She was just an inferior maid, who survived probably because she was not allowed to get in the carriage and had to sit on the shaft of the carriage with the coachman.

It was good to find a surviving maid, which offered them an opportunity to shift the blame onto the Qin's Mansion.

"You... you are..." Qing'er said. She had been helped to sit down in the teahouse below, where someone poured a cup of tea for her. After taking a sip, she recovered, but she still trembled all over with a pale face. Obviously, she was terribly frightened.

In fact, even a man would be terribly frightened, not to mention a little maid.

The carriage fell down in front of everyone, so there was no need to say that the little maid was the only one alive.

"I'm a servant of Old Madam Qin's. The Second Miss came down the mountain after hearing that Old Madam Qin was sick from me. Unexpectedly, after having a rest here for a while, I found that the Second Miss ran into an accident. What... what... can I do now? If Old Madam knew that the Second Miss ran into an accident, I'm afraid... I'm afraid that she will be too sad to survive!"

As the old maid said, she began to wipe off her tears and crouched down in front of Qing'er with a panic-stricken look.

Her words gave a clear explanation of the cause and effect of the matter. A moment ago, plenty of people had wondered why the Fifth Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion came down the mountain at this time. Who would come down the mountain at dusk when the rain yesterday made the rough mountain path slippery?

However, it turned out that the Miss did so because of worrying about her grandma. She seemed to be filial.

Some people sighed and thought that the Miss was so kind, but she seemed to be quite unfortunate. Could it be that as the "bane", she brought disaster to herself rather than brought disaster to others?

"Are... are you sent by the First Miss?" Qing'er said with difficulty, looking dull. After what had happened just now, it was reasonable for her to get freaked out.

"No..." The old maid said and rolled her eyes, not sure who Qing'er was talking about at the moment. On the surface, she worked for Qin Yuru, but in fact, she had been bribed by Shao Yanru in private.

"The First Miss... The First Miss Shao... The First Miss... The First Miss Qin..." Qing'er said and turned her head with difficulty to look at the old maid anxiously with tears in her eyes and her face as pale as snow, "Why... why did she do that to my master..."

Her words were confusing, but the old maid was panic-stricken. How could the First Miss Shao be exposed?

"I was sent by the First Miss Qin, not the First Miss Shao. It has nothing to do with the First Miss Shao!" The old maid reached out to take Qing'er's hand and explained in a low voice while comforting her.

"It's... it's the First Miss Shao. It must be the First Miss Shao. She... she has always disliked my master... Someone has done something to the carriage. The horse suddenly ran wildly just now. Only... Only someone from Duke Xing's Mansion could... do something to the carriage!" Qing'er said and stared at the old maid blankly, obviously in a confused state of mind.

Everyone around them stopped talking and stared at Qing'er and the old maid in astonishment.

"It's not the First Miss Shao. It's the First Miss Qin!" The old maid reached out to pinch Qing'er's hand hard with sweat on her forehead and said anxiously.

If the First Miss Shao knew it, she would get into serious trouble.

"It's the First Miss Shao... It's the First Miss Shao who can't tolerate my master..." Qing'er burst into tears and screamed. As she struggled to free herself from the old maid, her hands were shown in front of everyone and they saw the bruise on her hand left by the old maid's grip.

At first glance, anyone could tell that there was something fishy about the accident.

"Come on, seize the old maid!" Someone suddenly shouted, and the onlookers hurriedly stepped aside and saw a few local yamen runners rush over and hold the old maid down.

"Why... why do you seize me?" The old maid was shocked and screamed anxiously. She was supposed to be able to leave after saying a few vague words.

The First Miss Shao had prepared enough money for her so that no one could find her after she left the capital.

She had never expected that there would be local yamen runners in this place at this moment.

"She works for the First Miss Shao... She deliberately tricked my master to come down the mountain... She did it on purpose..." Qing'er said with a dull look and stared at the old maid. Suddenly she stood up, rushed out and began to scream, "Miss, Miss..."

"Stop her!" The head of the local yamen runners said.

Another two people immediately came over to pull Qing'er, who almost went crazy.

"Let's go to the back and have a look. Maybe the Miss is still alive!" After holding the old maid and Qing'er down, the head of the local yamen runners waved his hand and said. Others went to the back.

On the mountain path, Shao Wanru's carriage was empty and stopped there, but Shao Wanru and Yujie had gone...

Shao Yanru sat in her room and looked at the dim sky outside the window with a hint of a smile on her face, looking at leisure and elegant like she always appeared to be.

"Miss, the accident has probably occurred now!" Shuqi looked out of the window and said with a smile, "From now on, there will be no one against you!"

"Was there such a person before?" Shao Yanru said while leaning back lazily and comfortably with a smile.

"There was certainly no such a person before. How could the Fifth Miss compare with you? Now she ran into an accident on her way to the Qin's Mansion. No one could find out we are behind it." Shuqi rolled her eyes and said with a flattering smile.

She, who had lived a harsh life in the Yuhui Nunnery for a period of time, now felt inexplicably relieved.

Both the Fifth Miss and her two maids put a lot of pressure on Shuqi.

"Since it has something to do with the Qin's Mansion, Qin Yuru should be the suspect if they conduct an investigation. Qin Yuru and she has always hated each other, and Shao Wanru is the one who put Qin Yuru into her current situation. It has nothing to do with us!" Shao Yanru said with a pleasant smile and looked calm and elegant as if she would never get involved in anything.

A maid rushed in and accidentally fell down when entering the room, but she stood up in a hurry and rushed to the main room...

Chapter 604 A Private Meeting with Qiu Yu, Both of Them Harbor Their Own Intent

"First Miss, bad news, bad news..." Moyan rushed in and said, looking at Shao Yanru, who was in the room, in panic with a pale face.

"Why do you make such a fuss? Is this how you behave in front of an emergency as my maid?" Shao Yanru said coldly with her smiling face turning cold. Meanwhile, she had a bad intuition, so she held the teacup but didn't drink the tea immediately.

As her trusted maid, Moyan was capable of handling various things and had never been so flustered.

Besides, there was a big stain on the part of her clothes above her knees. It was obvious that she had fallen before.

"First Miss, something went wrong. The old maid has been seized!" Moyan took a deep breath and said.

"Old maid?" Shao Yanru said casually, but her face changed dramatically at once after she said that. She suddenly stood up and asked with a gloomy face, "What happened?"

"It's said that the Fifth Miss was tricked down the mountain and ran into an accident. However, a maid named Qing'er jumped out of the carriage and survived. After that, she insisted that it was you who instructed the old maid to do it. The old maid panicked and pinched the maid's hand, and it was seen by others. A group of runners of the capital yamen, who happened to be at the foot of the mountain, where the Yuhui Nunnery was, because of investigating into a case, took the old maid away!"

Moyan nervously wiped off the cold sweat on her face and told the story fluently.

"Why did the old maid get caught there instead of running away?" Shuqi also panicked and asked anxiously.

"I don't know what happened. I gave the old maid a large sum of money and told her to go far away, but now she didn't escape and was caught. What should I do now, First Miss? If she gives me out, I'm doomed!" Moyan said and cried out in fear.

It was Moyan who bribed the old maid. How could Moyan not panic at this moment?

"Did you go alone?" As the teacup in her hand fell on the table heavily, Shao Yanru asked with her face darkening after thinking for a while.

"No... I didn't go alone..." Moyan said and hurriedly shook her head with her face turning red due to panic, "There's another old maid. I was afraid that the old maid would ruin our plan, so I followed her."

"Is the old maid here?" Shao Yanru asked with a cold face.

"She's... she's still here..." Moyan said.

"Find an excuse. Claim that she stole something from my mother's yard and beat her to death!" Shao Yanru said and closed her gloomy eyes. When she opened her eyes again, she looked cruel.

"Yes, Miss. I'll instruct someone to do it right away!" Moyan hurriedly said and turned around in a panic to run out, but she was stopped by Shao Yanru, who looked sullen, "Let Shuqi go! I still have some questions to ask you!"

"Yes, Miss. I'll go right away!" Shuqi collected herself and said. As Shao Yanru's maid, she was capable of handling this kind of thing properly. She turned around, replied, and walked out.

Of course, they couldn't allow the old maid to stay alive. Otherwise, their mansion could get into trouble when the yamen runners found out about the old maid.

"Where did the news come from?" Shao Yanru stared at Moyan and said. At that time, she did not specially leave anyone at the foot of the mountain, where the Yuhui Nunnery was, to watch over the situation out of cautiousness, because Qin Yuru had sent someone there.

It would be inappropriate if the person she sent encountered the person Qin Yuru sent. She couldn't even let others find out that she had intervened in it.

"From the Ministry of Justice... Lord Qiu Yu sent a manservant over. He said that the case had been handed over to the Ministry of Justice. The people involved in the case are out of the management scope of the capital mayor, so it should be in the charge of the Ministry of Justice." As Moyan said, she almost burst into tears anxiously. If the case was in the charge of the capital mayor, it would be easier to handle. However, since the case had been handed over to the Ministry of Justice, it could be serious.

Although they had got rid of the old maid going with her before, she was still very worried and afraid that she would get involved in it.

Others might not know what kind of person her master was, but she certainly knew. If she got involved in it, she would probably get killed.

"Qiu Yu!" Shao Yanru thought for a while and said with a frown. She was really reluctant to have too many connections with Qiu Yu. She clearly knew Qiu Yu's feelings about her and was afraid that he would try every way to approach her so that the situation would be out of her control.

She had heard plenty of examples of someone doing wrong due to his deep affection!

However, she had to make use of Qiu Yu now.

"Is the manservant still waiting outside?" Shao Yanru took a deep breath and said. She had made up her mind to find out what was going on at any cost.

"Yes! He's still waiting outside the back door." Moyan said in a panic.

Shao Yanru nodded, walked up to the desk, picked up the writing brush, and wrote a sentence after thinking for a while. After leaving the paper for a while to dry, she folded it and put it into an empty envelope, and then said, "Give the letter to the manservant who delivered the message."

"Yes, Miss. Rest assured. I will do it right away!" Moyan took the letter and hurriedly promised, and then walked out of Shao Yanru's room after collecting herself.

An old maid of Duke Xing's Mansion stole a hairpin from Madam of Duke Xing and insisted that she was innocent after being discovered. She didn't cry and beg Madam of Duke Xing for mercy until the witness and material evidence were presented. Madam of Duke Xing hated her for feigning innocence before, so she directly instructed other servants to beat the old maid to death.

It made all the servants of Duke Xing's Mansion tremble with fear all night and feel as if they could still hear the old maid's wailing in the air. There had been examples of masters instructing to punish their servants, but masters basically did that in private. It was the first time that the servants had been summoned to watch a servant be punished.

The servants went back, trembling with fear. Feeling that there seemed to be ghosts in the shadow of lamps, all of them became increasingly terror-stricken and guilty.

They went to sleep after returning to their rooms.

No one noticed that when most of the people in the yard were summoned to watch the punishment, Shao Yanru left her yard with her maid, got out of the back yard through the back door, got in a carriage at the gate, and then left Duke Xing's Mansion.

The coachman basically took the alleys, where few people walked past, instead of streets. Fortunately, the coachman was familiar with the route and didn't go the wrong way even in the dark.

The carriage went all the way forward to a restaurant, which was prosperous with plenty of customers coming and going at the moment. Seeing two ladies come down from the carriage, the shop-boy hurried to greet them with a smile.

The maid stood in front of Shao Yanru, who was muffled up in a cloak, and told the name of a private room. The shop-boy replied with a smile and shouted, enthusiastically led them to the second floor, went to the inner part, and opened the door of a private room.

As the door was opened, Qiu Yu stood there with an excited look and stared at Shao Yanru, who was muffled in her cloak, with his burning eyes. He had just sent someone to deliver a message, but he didn't expect that his beloved girl would come to meet him. Such an unexpected surprise made it difficult for Qiu Yu to calm down.

He looked nervous with a slightly red face.

The maid waved her hand as a hint for the shop-boy to leave. The shop-boy left with a knowing smile and specially closed the door for them. He could tell at first glance that there must be something between the man and the lady.

The shop-boy could tell that the two of them must have an unusual relationship. Although the man did not disguise himself, his face turned red out of excitement when the lady showed up. Besides, the lady was muffled in a cloak, which obviously indicated that she was afraid of being seen by others.

Nevertheless, this kind of thing was not rare for the shop-boy. They considered the secret meeting between a man and a lady no big deal.

They, who opened the restaurant for doing business, didn't care about this kind of thing as long as they could make money!

The couple in the private room probably came here to meet secretly!

After the shop-boy got out of the private room, he deliberately winked at the other shop-boy at the stairs. The other shop-boy immediately understood, looked curiously at the door, through which the shop-boy had just come out, and nodded with a knowing smile.

This kind of customers were actually a little easier to please and more generous than other customers. Weren't they the ideal customers for a restaurant?

Qiu Yu had ordered dishes and wine. But seeing Shao Yanru take off the cloak on her, Qiu Yu still handed over the menu to her and said, "First Miss, have a look at the menu and see if there's anything else you would like to have a taste. If there's any, you can order them, and I'll tell the shop-boy to serve them together with other dishes!"

"That's fine with me!" Shao Yanru didn't care about the dishes at the moment, but it was inappropriate for her to show an anxious look, so she said with a smile.

"Please don't refuse me. It's a rare opportunity to invite you here. First Miss, please order one or two dishes!" How could Qiu Yu let his beloved girl down? He handed over the menu and looked as if he would insist on it until Shao Yanru ordered dishes, which made Shao Yanru quite displeased.

Nevertheless, she still needed to ask Qiu Yu for a favor, so despite her displeasure, she had to restrain herself, ordered a few dishes at random, and then sat down again.

Qiu Yu looked at the dishes she ordered, kept them in mind, and then instructed the manservant to take the menu out and tell the shop-boy to serve the dishes.

After sitting down, he picked up the teapot and poured a cup of tea for Shao Yanru, and then pushed the teacup in front of Shao Yanru with a big smile and his increasingly burning eyes.

"First Miss Shao, please have tea!"

He found the First Miss Shao in front of him increasingly pleasing to the eye.

"Your Excellency, I want to ask you why I got involved in what happened today. Could it be possible that someone, who hates our Duke Xing's Mansion, set me up?"

Shao Yanru was really in no mood to chat with him. After taking the teacup and taking a sip, she fell silent for a while, and then raised her head and said gently.

She was anxious, sad and even a little angry, which made her look pitiful and fragile.

Qiu Yu felt distressed and wanted to reach out and touch her to comfort her. But he knew that it was improper for him to do this at the moment.

He was glad that he got the news and immediately sent someone to deliver a message to the First Miss Shao. Otherwise, when everyone knew it tomorrow, he wouldn't be able to play a part in it, let alone get the chance to meet the First Miss Shao.

It was the First Miss Shao who invited him to meet here at this moment. It could be seen that she wanted to meet him eagerly. He thought that the First Miss Shao must also have feelings for him! Otherwise, she wouldn't have met him at night.

As he thought of this, he showed a much deeper feeling in his eyes.

"Don't worry. I will always protect you. We just got the maid's statement now, and the development of the case depends on how we handle it tomorrow. It has nothing to do with you, so I suppose that you

won't get involved in it. The maid just went crazy and talked nonsense. You don't have to take it to heart!"

Qiu Yu comforted Shao Yanru in a soft voice.

Chapter 605 Shao Yanru Finds that Everything Goes Wrong

"Your Excellency, please tell me." Shao Yanru lowered her eyes and said softly.

Although she was pleading, she looked dignified and scrupulously honest, which made Qiu Yu more convinced that his beloved girl did live up to her reputation as a dignified and decent lady.

He thought her quite a rare good girl, even in private. So he decided not to let Shao Yanru down and told her everything in detail.

He started with the accident, where the Fifth Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion hurried down the mountain but fell into the cliff with her carriage in front of others, and only a maid jumped off the carriage and survived.

However, people went to the lake under the cliff, but only to find that there was no one in the carriage and the Fifth Miss Shao had gone. Later, she and her maid were found on an old tree above the lake. They probably had hung on the tree when jumping out of the carriage. Fortunately, they were fine and just passed out.

It was discovered by the capital yamen runners at first because they happened to go to the foot of the Yuhui Nunnery to catch a villain. However, instead of catching the villain, they discovered such a case related to Duke Xing's Mansion. Besides, based on the terribly frightened maid's words, they found that the First Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion seemed to be the one who set up the Fifth Miss.

The capital yamen official thought the case was out of their administration scope, so he immediately reported it to the Ministry of Justice and it was immediately placed on file.

The Fifth Miss Shao, who had escaped from death in the accident, was picked up by Rui'an Great Elder Princess, who went there after hearing of the accident.

After Shao Yanru heard Qiu Yu's narration, her face turned a little ashen. She was shocked by the fact that Shao Wanru survived in the accident.

She pulled the handkerchief hard in her hand twice, hid the viciousness in her eyes and thought that Shao Wanru was quite lucky.

"Isn't the Ministry of Justice in charge of major cases? Now that my Fifth Sister is fine, why did the capital yamen official report it to the Ministry of Justice?" After thinking for a while, Shao Yanru raised her head and asked.

"It's not supposed to be something serious, but the one reporting the case said that it was related to your mansion and the Fifth Miss would have got killed if she hadn't been lucky enough. Since the Fifth Miss is a member of the royal family and of a high status, we can't handle it in a perfunctory manner."

Qiu Yu answered casually.

Meanwhile, Shao Yanru clenched the handkerchief in her hand with more strength and thought, "A high status? How could he describe a girl growing up outside as a Miss of a high status? It's so unpleasant to the ear."

Everyone knew that the lineal eldest daughter in a mansion was of a much higher status than other Misses. Why Shao Wanru was considered a Miss of a high status in Duke Xing's Mansion?

But now it was not the time to argue about it. Shao Yanru stood up, bowed deeply to Qiu Yu and said, "Thank you, Your Excellency. I'll report it to my father and grandma after returning. Since my Fifth Sister had such an accident, I should ask my father to find out who intended to set up our Duke Xing's Mansion."

Shao Yanru magnified the plot against Shao Wanru to a plot against Duke Xing's Mansion in an unnoticed way and thus to clear her suspicion.

"First Miss, since you are here, you should have dinner before leaving. How can I let you leave with an empty stomach?" Qiu Yu reached out to stop Shao Yanru from leaving with a smile and said with affection in his eyes. He, who finally got a chance to meet Shao Yanru in private, would not let his beloved girl leave easily.

Shao Yanru frowned and looked displeased. However, thinking that the case was in the charge of the Ministry of Justice, she could not refuse Qiu Yu directly.

As the door was opened, a shop-boy came in with dishes and glanced at the two of them with a smile. They were very close to each other, and Qiu Yu reached out to stop Shao Yanru from leaving. From the shop-boy's angle, they seemed to be holding hands. The shop-boy involuntarily thought that she was not a decent lady as he expected and didn't deserve such a ravishing look.

The shop-boy placed the dishes on the table and left with a smile.

Seeing the shop-boy come in, Shao Yanru stepped back and subconsciously avoided Qiu Yu. Qiu Yu didn't chase after her and stepped aside uneasily.

After the shop-boy left, he invited Shao Yanru back to her seat.

In the autumn, they found the room a little stuffy when the window was close, but felt cool when the window was opened. They could see the street out of the window, and it was lively in the darkness. The lifted curtain enabled their figures to be vaguely seen.

Opposite the restaurant was a jewelry shop composed of two floors, and there was a place for customers to have a rest on the second floor. Several Misses were talking about jewelry there. One of them looked out of the window and asked in astonishment, "Is it the First Miss Shao opposite?"

Their position was facing the window of the restaurant, where the lights were on, so they had a clear view. However, they couldn't make sure at the moment based on a side face.

"It seems to be her!"

"I think so, too!" Hearing one of them talk about Shao Yanru, the other two Misses also got interested and came over. Although they were not very close to Shao Yanru, they had seen the First Miss Shao, who was known as the first beauty in the capital from a distance.

“Who is that man?”

“Is it the First Young Master Shao?” They shifted their attention from Shao Yanru to Qiu Yu.

“No, the man doesn’t look like the First Young Master Shao!”

“I don’t think so either. Look, the man is so attentive to the lady opposite him that he even picks every dish for her. They don’t look like brother and sister at all!” Another Miss said.

However, she just saw the man’s side face and just felt that he didn’t look like the First Young Master Shao.

Several Misses got interested. They all leaned on the windowsill and pointed at the window of the opposite restaurant, guessing if the lady was the First Miss Shao and who the man was.

Their discussion finally attracted Shao Yanru’s attention. She raised her head and gave a hint to her maid, and her maid hurriedly stepped forward and drew the curtain.

Beside the window opposite the restaurant, several Misses, who were watching the fun, sighed helplessly and sat down. Although their view was blocked, it didn’t prevent them from continuing to talk about it.

The First Miss Shao, a well-known beauty, was meeting a man in private! This was really big news. But was it true? They were not sure, but only felt the lady looked like Shao Yanru.

In the room of the restaurant, Shao Yanru stood up and made her farewells. This time Qiu Yu did not stop her but said that he would inform Shao Yanru immediately if there was any news and asked Shao Yanru to rest assured.

After thanking him politely, Shao Yanru muffled herself in a cloak and went downstairs with her maid.

The shop-boy at the stairs hurriedly took two steps back and got out of the way, while saying politely, “Miss, have a safe trip home. Please come again next time!”

Shao Yanru nodded and hurried down the stairs with her maid. Unexpectedly, there came several strong men, who seemed to be drunk, from downstairs. Four or five of them crowded the foot of the stairs and staggered up, leaving no room for others.

Shao Yanru leaned against the armrest and made way for them, intending to go downstairs after they left.

The four drunk men came up while swaying their arms. When one of them walked past Shao Yanru, he somehow swayed and bumped into Shao Yanru, which made Shao Yanru stagger and almost fall down the stairs. Fortunately, the drunk man reacted quickly, grabbed Shao Yanru’s arm and stopped her from falling down the stairs.

“Little... little beauty, I... I saved you. Why don’t you show me... your face!” The drunk man said and reached out in an attempt to lift Shao Yanru’s cloak.

“How dare you!” The maid behind Shao Yanru got anxious, pushed her way to the front of Shao Yanru and shouted angrily.

“What... what’s going on? I saved her just now... Why does she turn against me... at once?” The drunk man said. Although he seemed to have lost his sobriety, he still kept gripping Shao Yanru’s cloak and looked as if he wouldn’t let Shao Yanru go until he saw her face.

“How dare you! If you dare to touch my master, get ready to lose your hand!” The maid said harshly.

Shao Yanru brought her trusted second-class maid Yanxiao instead of Shuqi or Moyan, who usually followed her for fear that her identity would be exposed because of the company of her personal maid.

“I... I would like to see which mansion such a... tough Miss is from!” Seeing Yanxiao’s stern look, several drunk men burst out laughing. After that, one of them suddenly reached out to lift the hood of Shao Yanru’s cloak and said.

Shao Yanru was so scared that she involuntarily screamed and hurriedly put on her cloak.

“I’m from the Ministry of Justice. Get out of the way! Do you intend to hinder me from handling the affairs of the Ministry of Justice?” Qiu Yu’s cold face appeared at the top of the stairs. He said and stared at the drunk men with his cold eyes.

His claim to handle the affairs of the Ministry of Justice was enough to frighten the drunk men. They couldn’t help stepping back, and Yanxiao hurriedly took Shao Yanru’s hand and ran away.

After they got out and got in the carriage, Shao Yanru felt relieved and gnashed her teeth with hatred. If it weren’t for the fact that she had to conceal her identity during the visit, she would not have spared these reckless drunk men. Fortunately, Qiu Yu showed up and helped her out. Otherwise, she would not be able to leave easily.

“Miss, shall I find out who those drunk men are and send some people to teach them a lesson?” Yanxiao said angrily.

“No!” Shao Yanru shook her head and said with a gloomy face. She couldn’t create side issues at this time, so she had to go back and report it to her mother.

Although Shao Wanru escaped from death in the accident, she was still in a coma. Meanwhile, a terribly scared maid insisted that it was Shao Yanru who set up Shao Wanru. It was a knotty problem, so Shao Yanru thought that she had to take the preemptive opportunity.

When Shao Yanru hurried home to talk it over with Madam of Duke Xing, it was not peaceful either in the courtyard of Young Madam of Duke Yong’s Mansion. At that time, Qin Yuru had held back a trick and specially sent someone to stay in the teahouse to watch over the situation and report it to her. Unexpectedly, the person heard the words of the old maid, who betrayed her.

So the person immediately came back to report it to Qin Yuru in a hurry.

Qin Yuru had lived a hard life in Duke Yong’s Mansion in the past two years, but it endowed her with shrewdness in some respects. On hearing that the old maid defended the First Miss of Duke Xing’s Mansion but actually shifted the blame onto the Qin’s Mansion, she knew that the old maid should work for the First Miss of Duke Xing’s Mansion. She got so furious that she smashed several cups on the table.

The old maid she assigned to serve Old Madam Qin actually worked for Shao Yanru. How could she not be furious?

Chapter 606 Place the Changxing Grass by the Road Again

Qin Yuru thought of the meeting with Qi Rongzhi, Qi Rongzhi's words, and that she set up the trap as Qi Rongzhi told her, and then Shao Wanru ran into an accident. But after that, the old maid shifted the blame onto the Qin's Mansion. In this case, she would probably be associated with the accident. How could Qin Yuru bear such a result?

After tidying herself up, Qin Yuru stood up and said with a gloomy face, "Let's go to meet grandma!"

Her current grandma was her previous maternal grandma and the only person in Duke Yong's Mansion who was nice to her. Now her grandma was the only one who could help her.

Since Shao Yanru dared to set her up so that both Shao Wanru and her suffered great losses, she would not let Shao Yanru get what she wanted!

In the main room, the only room with lights on, of a courtyard of Rui'an Great Elder Princess's Mansion, Shao Wanru leaned against the couch, while Doctor Qi was feeling her pulse.

Great Elder Princess sat on the edge of the couch, frowning uneasily. She, who had always sat straight elegantly, stooped slightly and looked uneasy and nervous at the moment.

It was Chu Liuchen who sat on the other chair. He picked up the teacup and took a sip, and then glanced at Great Elder Princess and comforted her in a gentle voice, "Don't worry, great-aunt. Zhuozhuo will be fine!"

Great Elder Princess nodded in response to Chu Liuchen's words, but she still fixed her eyes on Doctor Qi for fear of seeing any unusual expression on his face.

Qi Jue finally put down his hand.

"Doctor Qi, how is Zhuozhuo?" Rui'an Great Elder Princess asked nervously.

"Your Highness, rest assured. She's just been frightened a little. It's nothing serious!" Qi Jue said with a smile.

"Well, what should we pay special attention to?" After breathing a sigh of relief, Rui'an Great Elder Princess still asked worriedly.

"Your Highness, you don't have to be overanxious. She just needs to rest for some time!" Qi Jue said. Glancing at Chu Liuchen, who was sitting aside and enjoying his tea, he really wanted to tell Great Elder Princess that the Fifth Miss, who was lying on the couch, was actually fine!

In fact, how could the Fifth Miss get hurt? The secret guard took her to a tree on the cliff and hung her on it. Not long after that, someone came up to save her. Although it looked a little bit dangerous to hang her on the tree, it was actually no big deal. From his point of view, the Fifth Miss was quite bold and absolutely incomparable to ordinary Young Ladies.

Even the idea of hanging her on a tree was put forward by the Fifth Miss.

"Is she really fine?" Great Elder Princess asked worriedly again.

"It's nothing serious!" Qi Jue promised again.

Seeing that Qi Jue promised again, Great Elder Princess finally felt relieved. She grabbed Shao Wanru's hand and said angrily, "Zhuzhuo, do you know who intended to hurt you?"

Great Elder Princess, whose mind had been occupied by Shao Wanru's condition, finally had time to ask about the accident before.

"Great-aunt, you can send someone to check the traces over there now. If I didn't miss my guess, they had probably used the grass that could drive the horse crazy!"

Chu Liuchen said.

"What grass?" Rui'an Great Elder Princess asked in astonishment. She had neither heard of this kind of grass nor known this kind of thing.

"Changxing grass, a kind of grass can drive horses crazy. There should be this kind of grass by the road, along which the carriage came down, and the road leads to the cliff! This kind of grass is planted in the border areas, where nomadic people live, rather than in the Central Plains, and this kind of grass is very rare even in the areas."

Qi Jue explained.

This kind of grass drove the horse crazy so that the horse fell off the cliff. No one could find anything unusual. Moreover, the horse had fallen into the lake and died, which made it more difficult to find out the truth!

The one set up such a trap at the intersection, where those in the teahouse could see it clearly, in order to make those people witnesses of the carriage falling off the cliff accidentally.

The slippery road wet by the rain yesterday, the dark sky, and the coachman, who got slack when they were going to arrive at the foot of the mountain, the above factors were enough to convince others that it was just an accident. What they should do now was to restore the case, where all the traces had been wiped out, to an accident!

Changxing grass was the only thing capable of making the horse lose control at the section accurately. Nevertheless, what was certain was that even if Changxing grass had been used in the plot, it had probably been cleaned. But Chu Liuchen happened to have a few blades of Changxing grass.

"I'll send someone to check it now!" As Rui'an Great Elder Princess said in rage, she stood up and was about to go out.

"Great-aunt, wait a moment. The grass may have been cleaned up now. You may find nothing even if you go there!" Chu Liuchen waved his hand and said. Xiao Xuanzi stood out from behind him and handed a small box to Great Elder Princess.

"Great-aunt, there are a few Changxing grass. Send someone to take them there, bury them in the mud and step on them to make them look smashed. After that, you can go there and find some traces in front of a group of people. Remember to leave one or two of them for the Ministry of Justice!" Chu Liuchen narrowed his eyes and said lazily.

Ordinary people didn't know Changxing grass, but the members of the Ministry of Justice were different. There were certainly some talents knowing well about something obscure in the Ministry of Justice, so it was most suitable to let them find the grass.

Rui'an Great Elder Princess understood what Chu Liuchen meant. She nodded, immediately instructed someone to take the box and then left in a hurry.

"Doctor Qi, if there is nothing else, you should go back early!" Chu Liuchen waved his hand and said to Doctor Qi, who was still wiping his hands slowly.

Qi Jue had no choice but to roll his eyes since he knew that Chu Liuchen was the kind of person who burnt the bridge after crossing it.

It was obviously him who was invited here by Great Elder Princess, but Chu Liuchen insisted on coming with him. Now Chu Liuchen even drove him, who led Chu Liuchen here, away. Alas, he was so unfortunate to have such an ungrateful master!

Glancing at the delicate Fifth Miss Shao, who was leaning against the couch, Qi Jue was really worried about her. She was so pitiful to be the evil man's future wife!

He complained in his heart but didn't dare to show it on his face. Despite his reluctance, he still asked slowly, "Your Highness, should I wait for you outside and go back with you?"

"No, you can go back now!" Chu Liuchen waved his hand, said curtly, and glanced at Qi Jue with cold eyes. Qi Jue, who was frightened, involuntarily sped up, packed up his medicine chest neatly, and walked out of the room joyfully.

Did his master mean it?

Chu Liuchen waved his hand. Xiao Xuanzi winked at Yujie, who stood in front of the bed, and then swung his arms and turned to walk out.

Yujie hesitated for a moment and looked at Shao Wanru. Seeing Shao Wanru nod at her, she got out of the room.

"Do you want some water?" Chu Liuchen looked at Shao Wanru and said, picking up the kettle on the table and pouring a cup of water for her.

Shao Wanru sat up and nodded.

Chu Liuchen came over with a cup of water and handed her the cup. Shao Wanru reached out to take it and drank half of the water before putting it down.

In fact, she took no risk when being hung on the tree. If she fell down, she would fall into the lake. Even if her life would not be in danger, her reputation would be ruined.

There were hardly any ladies, who could get her out of the water, and plenty of onlookers. If her clothes got wet, her reputation would be tarnished.

So at that time, she held the branch tightly, for fear that she would fall down accidentally when the wind blew over.

Chu Liuchen took the cup from her hand and grabbed her hand hard.

Shao Wanru screamed in pain and her face immediately turned pale. Although Doctor Qi had applied medicine to her wound, she still felt a sharp pain when he pressed her wound so hard. Besides, she had sprained her ankle and not recovered yet, and she had probably bumped into something when being rescued. In fact, her legs were also injured.

She only said that her hand was injured without mentioning other injured parts for fear of making Great Elder Princess overanxious.

“Are you afraid of pain?” Chu Liuchen said with a handsome but annoying smile and spread Shao Wanru’s palm to have a look. Her palm bled after being pinched by him, which made Shao Wanru frown in pain.

Shao Wanru nodded and looked pitiful. She appeared to be fine, but in fact, she had plenty of wounds.

“Take off your dress and let me have a look!” Chu Liuchen said and looked down at her dress, which was messy and torn.

“I... You don’t need to do that. In fact, it’s nothing serious!” Shao Wanru said with a red face and intended to withdraw her hand. But her hand was held tightly by Chu Liuchen and she could not withdraw it.

“Would you like me to help you or do it yourself?” Chu Liuchen raised his eyebrows and said lazily.

Shao Wanru hesitated for a moment and thought about it. Knowing that he was not the kind of person following the rules, she lifted the hem of her dress and then her pants under her dress with a blush on her face.

Under her pants, he could see several scratches with dried blood stains on her white and tender skin, and some of them looked serious.

With his eyes becoming deeper, Chu Liuchen put the cup in his hand on the table, crouched down in front of the bed, and reached out to tear off her pants. At the sight of more wounds, he compressed his thin lips with apparent anger on his taut handsome face.

“Shao Wanru, you played quite a good trick and were quite cruel to yourself!” Chu Liuchen said with a sneer, reaching out to fetch a wet towel from the basin beside him and begin to wipe her wounds.

He wiped her wounds so hard that her wounds, which had been scarred before, bled again at once. Shao Wanru couldn’t help groaning, stared at Chu Liuchen with tears in pain, and begged, “Your Highness, please be gentle!”

“Why didn’t you ask those trees to be gentle before?” Chu Liuchen said and focused on wiping her wounds hard. He then looked up at Shao Wanru with dark waves rolling in his eyes as if something was going to be washed ashore. His overwhelming aura made her unable to speak at the moment.

“I...” Shao Wanru said. She was in so much pain that she almost cried and could only look at Chu Liuchen pitifully. Of course, it was not the time to pretend to be tough now. “I... I didn’t know that I would be terribly hurt!”

"You didn't know?" Chu Liuchen said, lowered his head again and began to wipe her wounds even hard. Another wound of hers bled. "If you didn't know it, how could you put yourself in such danger? I didn't expect that the Fifth Miss of Duke Xing's Mansion could be so cruel to herself. It's the first time that I've seen such a Miss!"

Chapter 607 Tell Me the Next Time When You Want to Go Downhill

Shao Wanru felt that he was not helping her but hurting her again. When she was hung on the tree on the cliff, she was too nervous to notice the injuries though she was injured. Therefore, she didn't feel it so painful. At this moment, he wiped her wound open, and her forehead was covered with sweat because of pain. Her face turned pale, and she reached out for Chu Liuchen's hand subconsciously.

"Your... Your Highness, it hurts so much!" She looked at him with a pitiful look in her beautiful eyes, showing a look of weakness.

"Now you know it hurts. What were you doing before? I told them to protect you, not to hang you on a tree! Since they failed to fulfill their duty, I'll replace them with someone else!" Chu Liuchen said coldly, yet his hands became gentler. He no longer wiped her wound with so much strength.

Shao Wanru held his hands quickly, but this time, it was not to stop him from wiping her wounds. She asked hurriedly, "What happened to the hidden guard?"

"I don't need a useless man!" Chu Liuchen said with a frosty look.

"No, he didn't do it out of his own will, but I asked him to help me. Your Highness, this will never happen again. In fact, I just felt that I could no longer stay in the Yuhui Nunnery, so I took the chance to go downhill with them," Shao Wanru said in a hurry, sensing that things might go worse. She didn't dare to hide it anymore.

Qing'er was her guard in public, while there were two hidden guards protecting her in dark. On normal days, these two guards were responsible for delivering messages downhill, and Qing'er would contact them. Since she had Qing'er and these two hidden guards with her, Shao Wanru felt that it was easier for her to handle things. It was the same this time. Jing Zhaoyin's men would appear below Yuhui Nunnery just because the hidden guards delivered the message to Chu Liuchen asking him to arrange for it.

"So you put yourself in danger? Shao Wanru, how capable you're! You really dared to do so just for this purpose!" Chu Liuchen suddenly threw the handkerchief on Shao Wanru's fair shanks and stood up with a grim look. He sat down in front of the bed and pulled Shao Wanru into his arms, looking down at her.

Before Shao Wanru could react, she was kissed on the lips, and both her hands and head were pressed tightly. As a result, she had to bear Chu Liuchen's hot breath...

Chu Liuchen didn't let her go until a long while later. The look around his eyes and eyebrows appeared gentler. He reached out to touch the corner of Shao Wanru's lips, which became even softer after the kiss, and the look in his eyes was still unfathomable.

Shao Wanru gasped heavily while she reached out to push Chu Liuchen subconsciously. She had never seen him so angry like this. The two of them had always been courteous to each other, and sometimes, there were some ambiguous interactions between them, but they had never been as passionate as

today. This made Shao Wanru both shy and annoyed. Her heart beat wildly, and she didn't know what to do next.

Sensing that Chu Liuchen's body temperature also went high, Shao Wanru was at a loss even more and pushed Chu Liuchen. Her eyes became watery, making Chu Liuchen feel heartbroken and take pity on her. Her delicate and charming face, as beautiful and attractive as flowers in full bloom, made his heart race.

While growing older, Shao Wanru became increasingly beautiful. However, she had always remained aloof in front of others, which covered her charms. Just now, because of the kiss, her charms were revealed completely, and she was as beautiful as a dream and fantasy, so charming and attractive.

Chu Liuchen held her in his arms tightly again before letting her go slowly. As the girl was becoming more and more beautiful, she shouldn't go outside after returning to the capital. Since now she got injured, it was better for her to stay and have a rest in the yard.

With this in thought, Chu Liuchen gradually regained his composure. He let go of Shao Wanru and squatted down to wipe Shao Wanru's wound. This time, his movement was so gentle that Shao Wanru almost didn't feel any pain.

After wiping all the stain off her feet, he took out a bottle of ointment from his inner pocket. He applied some light green ointment to her wound, and she immediately felt a cool feeling from her legs. She couldn't help blushing, let out a groan of comfort, and relaxed completely.

It was quiet in the room, and only their breathing could be heard.

"Tell me next time when you want to go downhill." Chu Liuchen stood up, reached out for one of her hands, and ripped the sleeve, revealing her fair and tender arms, where there were scratches.

"This is no big deal, but if you intervene, it may become a big deal which is not easy to deal with," Shao Wanru said in a euphemistic manner. She surely knew Chu Liuchen's ability, but she didn't want to bother Chu Liuchen for she could deal with these affairs of the inner court herself.

Moreover, she had the people sent by Chu Liuchen with her, so it could be regarded that Chu Liuchen helped her in secret. Without Qing'er and these hidden guards, she wouldn't have taken the things over so smoothly.

Chu Liuchen snorted and ignored her. He cleaned the wounds on her arms with a handkerchief before applying ointment to them.

Shao Wanru lowered her eyes and let him treat her wounds obediently. Though he still looked grim, his aura was less aggressive. "These two hidden guards are good, don't replace them. They did a good job, and I get used to them, so don't replace them," Shao Wanru said.

"How could they have done a good job since you're injured like this?" Chu Liuchen said and raised his eyebrows.

"Well, we can't blame them for this... I made the request myself. I won't do it again." Shao Wanru begged with a soft voice. She looked at the wounds on her arms and blinked her watery eyes, putting on a look of grievance.

"Tell them to receive their punishment of twenty slaps!" Chu Liuchen said in a lazy tone.

"I..."

"One more word, it won't be as simple as twenty slaps." Chu Liuchen's voice lowered, and he cast Shao Wanru a threatening look.

After thinking for a while, Shao Wanru thought she'd better obey him. She pursed her lips and stopped mentioning the two hidden guards. "These two hidden guards have excellent martial arts, so it won't be a problem for them to stand these twenty slaps." she thought.

After treating all the wounds on Shao Wanru's arms, Chu Liuchen turned to look at her robe. Seeing his gaze, Shao Wanru was panicked. She bent down and hugged herself in a hurry, afraid that Chu Liuchen would tear her clothes in anger. "I don't have any wounds on my body except for my arms and feet. I got the scratches because I wanted to hold and grasp the tree branch tightly."

Chu Liuchen didn't insist this time. "Hmm," he replied in an ambiguous tone after seeing that Shao Wanru's robe was unscratched. He cleaned his hands in the basin and sat down beside the bed. He pulled Shao Wanru into his arms and tidied her hair that was scattered.

"In the following time, you can rest in this yard," Chu Liuchen leaned back into the cushion that Shao Wanru leaned before and said with a grim look.

Shao Wanru stole a glance at him, who was as beautiful as a banished immortal and thus looked so ethereal as if he were from another world. "There shouldn't have been such a perfect man in this world." Shao Wanru thought to herself. Chu Liuchen closed his eyes slightly, and his long, curly eyelashes hung above his eyelid, making him look even more charming.

His appearance would even make a woman feel a bit diminished by comparison.

If it were not for his light-colored lips, his pale face, and his sick and weak aura, he would be even more stunning. No man in the city could be his match.

Despite this, Shao Wanru still thought that Chu Liuchen's beauty was beyond gender. His pale lips made him look sick, but this also made him look so gentle like these gentlemen in ancient times. He lay there, eyes closed, looking so aloof and distant.

Everyone who saw this would take pity on him. Was this the reason why the Empress Dowager and Emperor doted him so much?

There were countless handsome men in the world, but he was unparalleled.

Shao Wanru didn't know from when her heart started beating wildly as if it were going to jump out of her throat. She blinked her watery eyes twice and lowered her head to kiss him on the lips. Compared with her red lips, his lips were so pale, which made him so gentle and handsome and different from other men.

He looked thin, but he was powerful. She could feel his chest so strong when in his arms, and it brought her comfort and peace. The faint fragrance of medicine was familiar to her.

As she had learned medicine from Mingqiu Nun, she was familiar with the fragrance of medicine. She found that the medicine fragrance on Chu Liuchen was so familiar and pleasant, so she relaxed down subconsciously.

Because of the accident, she had been tense all the time. Though she knew that she might get into trouble when she went downhill, she didn't know what kind of trouble it would be. She had kept an eye on the front carriage even when she was sitting in the back carriage at that time. Later, the front carriage rolled downhill and Qing'er jumped out of it. Then, with the help of the hidden guards, Shao Wanru climbed onto a tree on the cliff with Yujie. Though she was not hung there for long, she was filled with anxiety, afraid that she would fall off the cliff.

Later, she got injured, but she didn't tell Rui'an Great Elder Princess about it, afraid that the princess would worry about her. As a result, the wounds all over her body ached all the time, causing her to be tense. As she had applied ointment to these wounds, she felt cool and comfortable all over her body. The medicine fragrance filled her nose and made her relax.

She closed her watery eyes and fell asleep soon.

Sensing that Shao Wanru's breathing became steady, Chu Liuchen looked down at her. She looked like a child when she was asleep, no longer so vivacious but more childish. Chu Liuchen fondled her forehead, then her soft cheeks, and her lips at last. However, he furrowed his handsome eyebrows, giving others an ambiguous feeling.

He looked at her blankly and put her down after a long while. He pulled the quilt over and covered her with it before leaving.

"Your Highness!" Seeing him walk out, Xiao Xuanzi went forward and bent toward him in a hurry. Yujie followed him and looked into the room with a worried look before bowing to him as well.

"Your Miss is asleep. Go get her clothes changed before going to bed," Chu Liuchen said in an indifferent tone.

Yujie nodded immediately for she was eager to see Shao Wanru. She walked into the room and closed the door behind her. After passing the screen, she almost screamed when she saw that Shao Wanru's clothes were torn apart. However, she was bold after all. She covered her mouth hurriedly and went forward to check Shao Wanru's condition carefully.

"Let's dig into what happened last time!" In the corridor, Chu Liuchen's chilling voice sounded. "The gate of the palace!"

"Yes!" Xiao Xuanzi understood what he meant at once. His mouth corner twitched in secret. "Master is in anger. Who was so blind to provoke him..."

Chapter 608 The Uprooted Grass

Yujie relaxed down when she found that only the clothes around Shao Wanru's legs and arms were torn apart and that ointment had been applied to her wounds. She guessed that it was Prince Chen who treated Shao Wanru's wounds, but because of the etiquette between men and women, he didn't help Shao Wanru change clothes. Yujie now was full of admiration for Prince Chen and felt happy for Shao Wanru.

She, of course, knew that Shao Wanru and Prince Chen had been engaged under the order of Empress Dowager. Though Prince Chen had gone too far this time, it was because he was worried about Shao Wanru.

After figuring out this, Yujie let out a sigh of relief. She took out a piece of cloth from the wardrobe and carefully helped Shao Wanru change it.

This yard was prepared by Great Elder Princess for Shao Wanru, and it had been prepared for three years and was full of Shao Wanru's clothes, all of which were prepared by the princess as well. These clothes were in a large quantity and were very beautiful.

Yujie knew what Shao Wanru preferred. She selected a piece of plain and comfortable cloth for Shao Wanru and helped her take off the torn one and put on the new one. Yet, Shao Wanru didn't wake up, which showed how tired she was before. Yujie's movement became even gentler.

In fact, she had wounds on her body as well. She had grown up in the Jingxin Monastery since she was a child, and she usually followed Mingqiu Nun to collect medicinal herbs. As a result, she had been scratched many times. Back when she was hung on the tree branch with Shao Wanru, she didn't get many scratches, and her wounds were not as deep as Shao Wanru's.

Thinking that Shao Wanru was always pampered and had never gotten injured like this, Yujie felt heartbroken. She knew that both Young Lady Qin and Young Lady Shao were evil women, and she expected to see how they would fight each other this time...

It was destined to be an unusual night. The officials of the Ministry of Justice had taken charge of the case regarding what had happened beneath Yuhui Nunnery.

As it was dark now, it was impossible to investigate the matter even though they wanted to. Therefore, several officials of the Ministry of Justice stayed there, but they didn't survey the spot. Many people who had witnessed the accident all said that it happened because the road was slippery and led to the foot of the mountain. When the coachman was distracted, the accident would happen. Though it was an accident, they only had themselves to blame.

As for what that servant girl said, it was not true for she had gone mad.

Few people would believe that it was true.

It was right then that Rui'an Great Elder Princess came over. She didn't come before when she let some people come to pick Shao Wanru up. However, at this moment, she came with a lot of people and looked angry. Seeing her, the people in the tea house all stopped talking.

Seeing that it was the carriage of Great Elder Princess, the officials of the Ministry of Justice immediately had some people to receive her. The princess looked out of the carriage and saw that it was Qiu Yu.

"What brings you here, Your Highness?" Qiu Yu bowed toward the princess and asked cautiously.

After meeting Shao Wanru in select, he requested to guard the place at night so as to know the latest progress of the case at once.

"Mr. Qiu, I want to take a look at the mountain road. Why would my granddaughter's carriage roll down the mountain? I heard that some people have gone downhill before, but they were fine!" Sitting high in

the carriage, the princess looked at Qiu Yu coldly. As Qiu Yu was Duke Liyang's youngest son, the princess certainly had seen him before.

"Your Highness, it's too late now, I suggest you don't go there. If something happens, I can't take the responsibility," Qiu Yu said with a bitter smile.

"I don't need you to take any responsibility. I'll take the responsibility myself. I just want to know whom Zhuozhuo had provoked. This person hated her so much that he even came up with such an evil scheme," the princess said in a cold tone and got out of the carriage with the help of her old maid. She looked at Qiu Yu grimly with her hands behind her back.

Qiu Yu's forehead was covered in a cold sweat, but he was too anxious to wipe it. "Your Highness, maybe it was just an accident, and no one wanted it to happen. It was hard to make it clear now since it was an accident. Fifth Miss shouldn't have gone downhill hurriedly at this time. How could..."

"So are you saying that Zhuozhuo was courting death herself, and this had nothing to do with others?" Great Elder Princess smiled coldly, and her chilling gaze fell on Qiu Yu in an imposing manner.

"Your Highness, I didn't mean this. I can't give you an answer until the Ministry of Justice investigates the matter thoroughly tomorrow," Qiu Yu replied unwillingly. Though he was frightened, he had to tell the truth at the moment.

"Can't investigate it thoroughly until tomorrow? No, it's too late. I must investigate it right now! I want to know whether it is the young lady of the Qin's Mansion or the young lady of the Shao's Mansion that wanted to hurt Zhuozhuo. Or did they plot it together?" the princess said in a cold tone and walked to the entrance of the road with her back straight.

A bunch of servant girls and old maids followed her.

Seeing this, Qiu Yu knew it was impossible for him to stop the princess. He could only wave his hands, signaling the people of the Ministry of Justice to follow the princess to go uphill.

He couldn't let the princess talk nonsense. As a matter of fact, he had someone investigate the matter as well, but found nothing, so naturally, he didn't think there was anything fishy.

Thus, he was not anxious now. No matter how overbearing the princess was, Duke Xing's Mansion was powerful as well and wouldn't let the princess talk nonsense. As for Qin's Mansion, Qiu Yu didn't think about it.

Seeing that they went up the mountain, some onlookers followed them for fun.

The people who came with the princess put many lanterns around the place, lighting the place as bright as day. Some maids went forward and found obvious tracks left by wheels. Judging from the tracks, the carriage ran off the road directly without any obstacle, and there were no other tracks.

Some careful maids of the princess's mansion checked the spot, and half an hour later, they came back to report to the princess, shaking their heads, because they found nothing suspicious. There was only one rut leading down the mountain. The carriage must have sped up where the rut became deeper, and this was the main reason which caused the carriage to fall off the cliff.

This had nothing to do with others.

Qiu Yu let out a sigh of relief. He had been afraid that the princess would make trouble out of nothing. Without any high official there, he feared that he couldn't deal with this imperious princess. Now, the princess had nothing to investigate further and found nothing suspicious, so she couldn't make any trouble even if she wanted.

However, before Qiu Yu could rest his heart completely, he saw a maid run to the princess hurriedly with a blade of grass in hand. "Your Highness, why would these grasses be uprooted? Even if they were crushed by the wheel, they shouldn't be uprooted."

The princess took the grass with a grim look. She looked at it with a frown, and the people around her also looked at the grass in the light.

It was a normal blade of grass, which was not special and looked the same as other grasses. There was mud on the grass and rut on the mud, which indicated that the carriage had run over the grass.

The root of the grass was not short, and some of its leaves were crushed. However, its rootstock was complete.

"Yeah, the wheel must have run over it very fast, and it's possible for the leaves to be crushed, but how could it be uprooted? It doesn't make sense," someone who had taken several careful looks at the grass chimed in.

"The grass could be broken off and crushed, but it couldn't be uprooted!" someone said in a certain tone.

These people were travelers and were experienced. On hearing their words, many people nodded with agreement and found the grass to be suspicious.

"Your Highness, I've found such a blade of grass as well. It's not crushed but uprooted," another maid picked up a blade of grass and said.

During the following time, several stalks of grass in the same condition were picked up. The ruts on them showed that they had been run over by a wheel, and only several leaves of them were broken, yet they were all uprooted.

This was abnormal. Qiu Yu became anxious again. If the carriage hadn't slipped down normally, Duke Xing's Mansion would possibly be involved. Qiu Yu had promised Miss Shao that she wouldn't be involved, but judging from the current situation, it would be hard for him to explain to Miss Shao.

Taking two steps forward, Qiu Yu came up to the princess and said with a smile, "Your Highness, it's just several stalks of grass. It's nothing special. Maybe this kind of grass is soft and easy to uproot. When the wheel ran over, these shallowly-rooted grasses were uprooted."

The princess squinted at Qiu Yu and said, "Since this case has been recorded by the Ministry of Justice, it means it's not a small case. My granddaughter almost lost her life. Even if the case is reported to His Majesty, I believe he will bring me justice and won't try to put me off with such a ridiculous excuse like you did."

"Your Highness, this case hasn't been settled..." Qiu Yu argued, and his face blushed.

“Enough! I don’t want to argue with you. I need to go back to take care of my granddaughter. She hasn’t woken up yet. As for these stalks of grass, I’ll hand them to the Ministry of Justice.” The princess had some people collect the grasses that were found and turned to the tea house with a bunch of people.

Her carriage was waiting for her outside the tea house.

After passing the tea house with this group of people, the princess got into the carriage, which made a turn and ran away, leaving a bored man and the people of the Ministry of Justice behind.

“Your Honor, what should we do now?” a man of the Ministry of Justice came over and asked Qiu Yu, who was in a daze.

“Let someone guard the place and don’t let anyone go in or out.” Qiu Yu collected his thoughts and bit his teeth before saying. Before the matter was investigated clearly, the spot shouldn’t be touched.

However, the one who had touched the spot was Rui’an Great Elder Princess, and she did it under his nose, so he didn’t think he had neglected his duty...

It was a speechless night, and the next day, the news turned the capital upside and down.

The news caused a stir because there was a well-known rumor that Fifth Miss Shao was a scourge. No one had expected that this miss had an accident so soon. This matter was associated with the well-known rumor, which even caused the Emperor to intervene. This time, this miss almost lost her life just because of going downhill.

People suspected that maybe someone really had framed Fifth Miss Shao.

The servants of Rui’an Great Elder Princess went to the Ministry of Justice early in the morning and even beat the big drum at the door of the Ministry of Justice. They came with the princess’s message and several stalks of grass found under the rut.

The main official of the ministry was disturbed by this matter as soon as he arrived. However, they couldn’t do anything but to survey the spot again in a hurry since the other party was the princess. They took back two stalks of grass from the cliff.

Since then, these strange stalks of grass caught people’s attention, but no one knew what was strange about these grasses. The case was in a deadlock.

However, the following day, someone suddenly came to the Ministry of Justice...

Chapter 609 Concern and Deceit

“What’s wrong, Ru’er? Are you frightened because of your mother’s punishment for the servant’s misbehavior?” asked the Old Madam as she stroked Shao Yanru’s hair lovingly.

The Old Madam has been feeling better lately, and the physician left instructions that her condition only needs to be treated slowly and gently. In her copper-brass frock bedecked with a necklace of Buddhist beads, the Old Madam and her benign and kind smile demonstrated her as a kind and pleasant person with great observance to Buddhist teachings of benevolence.

With a face filled with concern, she lightly tugged at Shao Yanru’s hands for her to come closer.

"Come to think of it, your mother should have handled the matter with more care. I won't disagree with meting out punishment; the girl should count herself lucky that your mother decided to settle the score privately than have her dragged to the county magistrate. But there was no need for everyone to watch her being punished. Look at how badly shaken you are now!"

The Old Madam looked painfully at the pale-stricken Shao Yanru, blaming instead the daughter-in-law she has always loved.

But it was hardly anything of surprise; Shao Yanru might not be the oldest of the Old Madam's grandchildren, but she was the old dowager's favorite that not even Shao Hua'an, the eldest, could possibly compete.

"I'm worried about Fifth Sister, Grandmother!" whimpered Shao Yanru, lowering her head as she tugged at the Old madam's hand, "I want to see her, Grandmother, please! I wonder if she's awake! She's a daughter of this house, it's not right that she is kept at the home of the Great Elder Princess!"

The very mention of Shao Wanru caused what pleasantness on the Old Madam's face to evaporate immediately and was replaced by cold fury. She knew all about what happened to Shao Wanru at the Yuhui Nunnery yesterday and it hardly amused her. "Nothing she did suggests that she treated this place as home. There's no need for you to be worried about her. You're too kind, Ru'er. Remember how you insisted to go accompany her when she went to the mountains to live in peace, and look at where that has landed you!"

An irate Old Madam poked at Shao Yanru at her forehead forcefully for good measure.

"But Grandmother! She's our Fifth Sister!" exclaimed Shao Yanru with protest, her eyes reddish and wet.

The Old Madam sighed as her hand lowered wearily. "Heaven knows for what reason she'd left downhill then only to get into trouble. And after she was rescued, she did not return home only to head for the Great Elder Princess's residence instead. Now, not only us, in fact, a word about her has reached even the ears of others. I'd say this: to be such a disgrace and traitor to the family, we should not have to be too kind to her."

Nanny Yu, who had been just behind the Old Madam in silence, lifted her chin suddenly as if to say something although Shao Yanru's glance at her made her cower quietly as she quickly yanked at her sleeves nervously to prevent herself from blurting.

The incident surrounding the Fifth Miss of the family was now the talk of the streets, saying how the Fifth Miss of the house had, under some cruel trick about the old Madam Dowager Qin, been duped into leaving her peace. She turned fainted halfway and was found by servants of Great Elder Princess Rui'an before taking her to her residence. The rumors spoke about how her family neglected to do anything about this, which was why the Fifth Miss of the house was not sent back home nor Duke Xing's Mansion, which sentries purported claimed ignorance as well.

As a servant, she could not forthrightly tell her lady how mistaken she was no matter how she wanted to.

But the fact remained: the Old Madam had been wrong all along.

"Please stay your anger, Grandmother. No matter how Fifth Sister has erred or whether she still treats us as family, it doesn't change the fact that she is one of us. Please don't mind her. I'm very worried about her, Grandmother. Can't I just go and see her?" Shao Yanru shook her grandmother's arm, trying to coax her by behaving adorably.

Unable to say no to the imploring face of her most doted granddaughter, the Old Madam felt only annoyance and resentment. She has only the deepest loathing for Shao Wanru, a veritable troublemaker, and she had to rub the Buddhist beads on her necklace, struggling to find solace and calmness.

Was this a debt from a previous lifetime, the old dowager wondered, that her entire family is now paying the price for.

"Go," she said, "Bring something for her health too. See if she is still unconscious or if everything's just a ruse. Tell her, if she's awake, to come home. She's a daughter of the house of Duke Xing and it's unsightly for her to stay at the home of maternal relatives. I don't want people to say that we don't have enough place for her here." On that note, the Old Madam ended with a frosty snort.

Nanny Yu once again looked as if a thousand words were trying to spill out her mouth. It was true that the little room was prepared specially for the Fifth Miss, but it did not come without the fear for the influence of the Great Elder Princess. What was more, the Madam of the house had only asked servants to move all furniture outside with nothing else brought in return to make the room habitable at all.

Knowing better than to contradict the orders of the Madam of Duke Xing, Nanny Yu's head drooped again with silent reticence.

"All right then. I'll go now to see Fifth Sister, Grandmother. I'll tell you about her when I get back so don't you worry!" chirped Shao Yanru cheerfully.

With her cold demeanor now melted, the Old Madam bobbed her head profusely. "Go then, my dear. But remember to not antagonize her. Just come back if she says anything nasty and ignore her. Just get back here safely!"

Shao Yanru was not her grandmother's favorite only because of her cute and delightful charms, but also because of the hopes resting on her shoulders. The Old Madam Dowager has always believed that her most doted granddaughter would one day be the very instrument that would further the influence of her family and the dukedom, ensuring a dynasty that could last even centuries.

And for this reason, the Old Madam has only the deepest approval and love for Shao Yanru.

"I know, Grandmother!" replied Shao Yanru mirthfully. She got up and bowed deeply to the Old Madam before wheeling around merrily and trotted away with her servant girl in tow.

"This little young lass... She's just too kind," breathed the Old Madam heavily as she watched her granddaughter leave, "She's as important as a blade of grass to them, yet she's so concerned about them."

Understanding that the Old Madam was making conversation, Nanny Yu responded with a benign smile, "Please don't blame the First Miss, Old Madam. She's a kind and gentle young lady of exemplary pedigree, and it's all because of you. No one across the entire capital ever speaks of the First Lady in

vain. In fact, many have only the greatest of praise for her. She's truly one who possesses the bearing of a true lady of the house."

No one would object that Shao Yanru was destined to be married to someone from the imperial family; it was no secret to the upper echelons of the house, including a few of the more trusted servants in the household.

And by "lady of the house", Shao Yanru could at least be a princess consort in the near future, or greater, the eventual queen of a nation!

The Old Madam squinted her eyes at the glamor of her granddaughter's prospects, nodding her head encouragingly. "Of course, of course. But this little young lass's just... You're right, I guess. She has the makings of a great lady because of the distinguished upbringing she's been accorded to. The same can't be said for the youngest... Petty, to say the least of that little wench of common rearing. Hardly the material to be a proper lady, I might add!"

The Old Madam was full of tenderness when she spoke of Shao Yanru, but she quickly turned sour, grumpy, and even disdainful once the conversation steered towards Shao Wanru.

She had never been any more regretful for taking in Shao Wanru. It was all a mistake and she should have done more to stop the girl from reclaiming her place in the family. And now she's the proud little minx who has hardly the best interest of the family nor the dukedom at heart, preferring to fraternize with the Great Elder Princess and slander the family!

The Old Madam could feel every fiber of her being quaking with anger whenever she thought of Shao Wanru and the foolishness of her softheartedness!

She had been a rebellious type even before her official introduction back into the family, but her recalcitrant streak barely diminished since then and yet she insisted to retreat into the mountains right after that to hold a vigil. Any disciplining would have to wait until she returns from the Yuhui Nunnery.

The house of Duke Xing would make no marriage arrangements for her if she remains the same abominable hellion, vowed the Old Madam. The house of Duke Xing could afford the expenses of having her here, even if she would remain a spinster. In fact, they could have her confined at this cottage, here at the rear courtyard within the enormous grounds of the residence for the rest of her life. This might rid the entire family of any more trouble before she brings trouble and shame upon the house.

"I daresay the biggest difference between First and Fifth Misses, is that only one of them was personally brought up by you, Madam," chuckled Nanny Yu.

"Wait till Wanru's back, I'll make sure she becomes well-disciplined. I don't want her strutting around the capital, putting the family to shame," said the Old Madam to herself, hatching a determined plan of action. With still a few months ahead, she could well make some preparations so that she could begin the regimen as soon as possible to domesticate Shao Wanru before she even forgets what family she belongs to!

The carriage from Duke Xing's mansion came to a stop outside the residence of the Rui'an Great Elder Princess. A servant girl had come before the carriage carrying Shao Yanru arrived to inform the

residence of the latter's arrival. As Shao Yanru sat quietly in her carriage, she brooded silently with disquiet. She was utterly unaware of how Shao Wanru is now and she was worried to know how she is.

The rumor mill has been spinning all across the capital, saying it was either her or Qin Ruyu who had caused harm to Shao Wanru and this matter has caught even the attention of the Ministry of Justice.

Although it was Qin Yuru who had been responsible, she needed to be subtle lest she could be implicated as well. In her apprehension, she needed to meet Shao Wanru to decide her next course. She could always rely on Princes Yue and Zhou to help prove her innocence since the true perpetrator was Qin Yuru and she only needed to be careful to put as much distance as possible.

Another servant came scurrying out of the doors and led the carriage through a side entrance. Once inside, an elderly female attendant appeared to guide the carriage further inside.

When they reached a designated spot, Shuqi helped Shao Yanru disembark the carriage.

Shao Yanru looked around and found themselves in a vast courtyard with only two – including hers – carriages in the empty space. This must be where all the guest carriages stop, she realized, although that would mean someone else is here too to see the Great Elder Princess.

The other carriage was parked in a deeper corner with the side which should carry the emblem of the house it belongs to facing the other way. Shao Yanru could not discern from which family the carriage came from, but from the size of the carriage and its design, she surmised that it could only be a conveyance owned by a family of lesser stature and power.

All it took was just one glance and Shao Yanru finished her brief visual observation of the other carriage and she followed the elderly female attendant into the residence.

Her main mission here was to find out about Shao Wanru. Has she awoken or is she still unconscious, she wondered, but she knew better: Shao Wanru should be up by now.

Chapter 610 Confrontation

The elderly female attendant led Shao Yanru through a maze of labyrinthian corridors until they finally came outside a chamber. Having once spent some time here at the residence of Rui'an Great Elder Princess before, Shao Yanru knew she was outside the Princess's drawing-room. Its locale of being near but not part of the Princess's private chambers made it the Princess's favorite spot to meet her guests.

As she was led inward, there, sitting atop the seat of honor was the proud and stern Great Elder Princess.

Shao Yanru drew forward and politely bowed to the princess.

With a casual wave, the princess motioned to a chair to the side, bidding her take a seat.

Gracefully, Shao Yanru glided to her chair and sat down. Then she noticed a cup of tea on the table on the far opposite of the room. The Great Elder Princess must have been entertaining another guest just moments before, and no doubt would be the owner of the carriage she saw outside.

Withdrawing her gaze, Shao Yanru put on a deeply-concerned look, "May I inquire if my Fifth Sister is well, Great Elder Princess?"

The princess's hand came down, lowering her teacup from her lip as an icy stare shot at Shao Yanru, her displeasure visibly unmasked, "And you are all that the house of Duke Xing can offer? What about your grandmother and your mother?"

"I'm afraid the Grandmother is unwell. She was so worried that she wanted to come when she'd heard about Fifth Sister, but because of her condition, I had to tell her that Fifth Sister is fine. Only then could I keep her calm. Mother is with her now, keeping her company."

Shao Yanru replied respectfully with her head lowered and her tone reverent and humble.

The Great Elder Princess peered at her and noted her unusually respectful demeanor before she smirked, "Zhuzhuo remains unconscious. It won't matter whether you're here or not. You had best begone."

The Great Elder Princess spoke with hardly any reservations.

"I really want to know how Fifth Sister is, Great Elder Princess! Please! Please let me see her or I can't help but keep on worrying about her!" Shao Yanru's head jerked up with tears in her gaze.

She stood up slowly to walk to the princess and she knelt to the floor, begging, "Please, Great Elder Princess! I beg you!"

Shuqi quietly lowered herself into a kneeling bow right behind Shao Yanru.

The entire drawing-room turned into an uneasy silence broken only by the princess's lifting of her cup, her gentle sip of her tea before she covered her cup with its lid.

Then the silence resumed – a palpably unsettling silence that evaporated Shao Yanru's earlier confidence. Has the Great Elder Princess seen something wrong?

A silence as disconcerting as this could be extremely taxing and strenuous to one's mind!

"Is the cottage arranged for Zhuzhuo ready?" Only after a long time did the Great Elder Princess's voice come quietly yet ringing enough to awake Shao Yanru from her stupor, mentioning nothing about asking her to arise.

"It is ready. It's in the same courtyard which you spoke of before, Great Elder Princess. The furnishing's almost done and if Fifth Sister can come home with me, she'd find it to her satisfaction!" Shao Yanru lied with a straight face.

The new house was ready, but the Madam of Duke Xing was nowhere near happy for it to change from Shao Hua'an wedding chamber into Shao Wanru's personal home. Hence she stripped the whole cottage bare and left little to nothing inside.

There was hardly any other furniture now aside from the set that the Great Elder Princess gifted to Shao Wanru.

"Get up," responded the Great Elder Princess who seemed satisfied, as her tone softened a little, "She's not yet woken up, but you may look – from a distance."

Shuqi got up at once and hurried to help Shao Yanru up.

"Thank you, Great Elder Princess," gasped Shao Yanru, not forgetting decorum. With another bow to the princess, she followed the old female attendant out of the chamber.

This time, they did not go far. With many twists and turns, they honeycombed through the residential estate of the Great Elder Princess. At times they would go around in circles that one might wonder if they were taking detours around the grounds.

Sprawls of trees and gazebos covered the grounds of the estate with them losing count of the ornate pavilions and rich garden terraces they passed by.

"Isn't that?! Miss Shao the Elder?!" gasped Qin Yuru from her gazebo when she saw Shao Yanru drifting past right before.

"That's the first daughter of the house of Duke Xing," said another elderly female attendant in response to Qin Yuru's remark. She peered at them retreating into the distance and added, "She must be here to see the Fifth Miss. I guess she's the only one of the family of Duke Xing to show any concern for the Fifth Miss. I'd never once believed those rumors about how she wishes ill upon the Fifth Miss. It's impossible!"

Unbeknownst to her, Qin Yuru's face only turned surly with dislike, her lips pouting firmly with annoyance. The ends of her eyes twitched uncontrollably as she remembered what her maternal grandmother had told her. With a long, deep breath to calm herself, she reminded herself about her main mission here: she needed to make friends with Shao Wanru and she could not allow anger to get in her way.

The rumors now swirling across all of the capital now embroiled either Qin Yuru or Shao Yanru as the villainesses of the whole story. Some spoke about a deranged maid, in her demented hysteria, insisting that she saw Shao Yanru, yet some also claimed that Shao Wanru had, by Qin Yuru's own request, abandoned her vigil to see Old Madam Dowager Qin!

At her grandmother's instruction, Qin Yuru was to lay the blame solely on Shao Yanru. At the same time, under no circumstances was she to ever underestimate her. The first daughter of the house of Duke Xing did not enjoy a good name and reputation of being admired and respected by all without fair reason. What was more, her maternal grandmother had told her what Qing Rongzhi had said to her, and the person behind it all could very well be Shao Yanru!

How dare she, thought Qin Yuru bitterly. Bold enough was she to try to use her to harm Shao Wanru, yet here she was, trying to put up the facade of a loving and caring sister!

Qin Yuru's face flushed with an ugly look as she contemplated how she had been used as a pawn by Shao Yanru. Rage pulsed vigorously in the veins bulging at her temples as she clenched her fists tightly, struggling to keep her anger in check.

She had come yesterday, but the Great Elder Princess did not allow her entry, saying how the princess was busy about Shao Wanru and had no time to entertain guests. That compelled her to leave and come back again today.

At daybreak this morning, Qin Yuru rushed here as soon as she could. But here she waited for hours and the Great Elder Princess did not deign to meet her, until finally now, she is allowed to see Shao Wanru.

Yet before she could reach Shao Wanru's chambers, Shao Yanru appeared out of nowhere and beat her to it.

"How far more?" Qin Yuru growled, wrestling with her burgeoning temper.

"We're almost there, Your Highness," said the old servant of the residence with perfunctory politeness, who has been immodestly frosty since they met with evident reluctance to be of service.

"Oh, just go on," grumbled Qin Yuru grumpily.

"Yes, of course, Your Highness. This way please!" mumbled the old maid as she pivoted the corner into another corridor.

Shao Yanru arrived first at the yard where Shao Wanru's cottage sat. Standing outside and waiting for a reply from the inside, she took a long, deep breath, and then Yujie came tearfully out of the cottage and bowed to her, greeting her, "First Miss!"

"Where's she?" Shao Yanru asked, catching a glimpse of another servant girl brewing a pot of medicine at one corner outside. The entire courtyard wafted with the pungent smell of herbs and not far away in an antechamber, Shao Yanru could see men dressed in the garb of the imperial physicians, none of whom dared to step out upon noticing her presence.

"The young Miss is still unconscious, First Miss. Even until... until now, I'm afraid. The Imperial Physician spoke about another viewing to see if she would wake up later. B-b-but if... I-i-if she won't... Things could be worse," Tears rolled out of Yujie's red-scarlet eyes.

But the first daughter of the house of Duke Xing observed carefully every movement on Yujie's face, searching for any flicker of hesitation with her doubtful eyes. After all, Shao Yanru could hardly believe that her sister is still unconscious until now.

"I'm having a look!" She insisted, putting a foot through the threshold and into the cottage.

"But First Miss... First Miss!" scrambled Yujie, trying futilely to stop Shao Yanru but was held back by Shuqi's strong arm. "The First Miss only wishes to see how her younger sister is!" she hissed at Yujie, "Tell me anything if you need to, and rest assured that nothing bad will come to the Fifth Miss!"

She pulled Yujie with her and followed Shao Yanru into the main room of the cottage.

The outer sitting area was empty with no one there save for the acrid scent of herbal medicine.

They drifted into the inner chambers and there was Shao Wanru lying serenely unconscious on a large bed, facing up with her hands crossed at her chest. Her face was a pallid flush of white and the usually rosy-red lips were now as sallow as milk like a doll made of ivory with no signs of life. One might wonder if she was already dead, if not for the heaving of her chest.

Her beautiful black hair strewn and tangled around her delicate face, accentuating her sickly complexion.

Nothing about her seemed well at all.

"Fifth Sister..." whimpered Shao Yanru. She did not expect to see Shao Wanru in such a dire situation and with a surprised cry of horror, she would have thrown herself to her sister, if not for Qu Le who stopped her right beside the bed.

"Please, First Miss. The Fifth Miss mustn't be disturbed," said Qu Le hoarsely. She looked as beaten as a tired horse, but she managed to stop Shao Yanru through sheer will and tenacity.

It was plainly obvious that the old matron had been overworking herself too much.

But with Shao Wanru now in a comatose state, one might dread if she could never wake up at all.

But Shao Yanru could have not been any more overjoyed. Her plan would not be a complete waste if Shao Wanru were to perish and that prospect lightens her heart.

"Has she been taking any medicine for the past two days?" asked Shao Yanru softly, peering a few meters away from the bed.

"She rarely takes her medicine. But the imperial physicians insist that we brew as much of the herbs as we can so that she could consume them whenever she could. At least, this way, the medicine could be of any use," muttered Qu Le raspily.

Shao Yanru's glance panned over to a steaming hot bowl of herbal medicine brew that reminded her of the servant girl still making more outside and the imperial physicians now still at the antechamber beside and she took another pensive sigh.

"Let me try feeding her," she said and she walked to the table.

"But First Miss, the medicine's still hot. She can't take this yet now. It needs to be colder," insisted Qu Le, shaking her head.

Shao Yanru paused in her steps, swiveling slowly to look at her still-comatose sister, "I've learned a thing or two about medicine before. Let me have a look at her."

She was still worried and she needed to make sure herself.

But Qu Le stopped her again, this time with Yujie, who managed to wrench herself free from Shuqi's hold. Both servants, despite their bedraggled appearance after hardly any sleep for nights and days, held their ground with unnerving grit that even Shao Yanru quivered.

"What are your intentions, First Miss? Do you wish harm upon our Miss, or is it Lady Qin this time?"

Outside the chamber, another band of people stopped in their tracks.